

The Impact of Organizational Culture on Identity – Alonzo Kelly (Keynote Address)

In regards to matters of identity, human beings are no different than any other living species on the planet. Each of us thrive in environments where both our **Base** and our **Place** are recognized and respected. Unlike other living species however, as critical thinking beings with the unique ability to ‘argue’, we are able to intentionally create organizational cultures that foster authentic relationships, enhance our performance, and realize our potential.

Alonzo Kelly is a dynamic Executive Coach, Professor, 3x Best Selling Author, and Radio Host. He has gained international and global attention as a premier consultant and strategist. Alonzo is recognized as one the nation’s leading experts on leadership development, strategic thinking, planning, and acting which results in individual and organizational goal achievement. He has appeared on America’s Premier Experts which airs on major networks across the country including ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX. Alonzo has served over 1,000 individuals through personal and professional development, delivered training to a plethora of Fortune 500 Companies, College and Universities, Institutions of Higher Learning, Foreign Countries, nonprofit organizations, and is consistently retained to be the keynote speaker at large and small events across the country. He holds a bachelor’s in Accounting, three master’s degrees (Public Administration, Human Resource & Labor Relations, Business Administration), and is nearing completion of a PhD in Multidisciplinary Human Services. He is also currently in the process of obtaining his Doctorate in Business Administration.

A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words – David Wolff

Art can be used to evoke rich dialogue in our gifted students. Through this breakout, learn two techniques to use fine art to create a springboard of conversation about one’s imagination/curiosity and building a moral identity.

David Wolff is the Principal of Neveln Elementary School in Austin, MN. David has been in education for 19 years as a classroom teacher, a District Coordinator of Gifted & Talented, and as Principal. He served on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Educators for the Gifted & Talented and Math Masters.

Academic Coaching to Support Identification of Accommodations for IEP and 504 Plans – Melissa Malen

Join Dr. Malen to learn about academic coaching for 2e students. More specifically, what exactly is academic coaching, who are 2e students, and what are typical disabilities that challenge 2e students in school? Discuss executive function (EF) skills: What are they and how do EF challenges how do they affect GT students? Learn how parents, teachers, and others can effectively coach 2e students. Discover tactics students can implement as learning accommodations that can result in improved achievement in school.

Dr. Malen is passionate about 2e student achievement and student development of learning accommodations. Melissa provides academic coaching to support student talent development and achievement. Melissa works with gifted students that are challenged with ADHD, ASD, NLD, written and reading comprehension disabilities, dyslexia, depression, and anxiety.

Calm, Curious Connections – Kris Happe

See your kids-students for VERY limited amounts of time? Learn to quickly connect with our kids, impact their stress levels, build their curiosity & wonder, at home, in the car, classroom, or anywhere. Helping children learn to manage their stress, regulate their emotions and quiet their minds is a long lasting, high impact strategy that we could be adopt. Just a few short minutes can positively impact achievement, clear thinking and overall well-being. Learn strategies and gain some resources to get started today. Discover how she builds this into her classroom management system and transition times and how you can implement this at home too. Come learn about Calm, Curious Connections!

Kris Happe is an educator with two gifted children. She has been a classroom teacher, gifted education program specialist, and district gifted coordinator. Kris served on the MDE's Gifted Education Advisory Council and presents at NAGC, SENG, MCGT and MEGT conferences. She is a certified SENG Model Parent Group facilitator.

Communicating With Your Child's Teachers and Administrators – Julie Light

This session will provide information about talking with principals, administrators, and teachers about the following: the district or school's program model used to meet the needs of gifted/talented learners; teacher training in academic and socio-affective needs of gifted/talented students; evidence of advanced coursework (higher level thinking, advanced content, and other academic rigor); asking teachers about curriculum or services that address critical and creative thinking as well as socio-affective/social-emotional needs; asking teachers about their observations and support regarding your child's learning habits, social interactions, classroom expectations, responses to academic rigor, 2E challenges, etc.

Dr. Julie Light, currently an academic coach and consultant, spent 20 years in public schools teaching G/T students, writing advanced curriculum, leading/training teachers, and developing/implementing/evaluating G/T programs. She has extensive experience bringing families, teachers, and administrators together, advocating for the unique and individual needs of G/T students. <https://julielightedd.wordpress.com/>

Cultivating Creativity – Erin Boltik

If creativity can be grown, why aren't we spending more time and efforts in cultivating it? Ideas and inventions are what shapes tomorrow. We need our gifted students to be more than consumers of knowledge, they need to be producers of new ideas. Einstein said, "Creativity is Intelligence having fun!" Let's focus on some great strategies that can be used anywhere and anytime to help cultivate a bit of fun and strengthen creativity!

Erin Boltik has 30+ years of experience in gifted education as a teacher, GT Coordinator, and now as an Administrator. As a teacher, her passion was always to find a way to tap the talents of her students. As an administrator, she enjoyed developing multiple new programs so that more gifted students are reached and their talents developed!

Empowering Gifted Learners by Design – Nathan Strenge & Sam Neisen

Empowering Gifted Learners by Design provides an interactive and collaborative workshop that engages participants in design thinking. Facilitated by award-winning education leaders, participants learn and practice strategies to design flexible learning communities that empowers all people – young and old – to pursue purposeful and authentic learning. Whether a parent looking for ways to engage their gifted child or an educational leader looking for a spark to empower students, this workshop will create space to ideate and collaborate together in a meaningful way.

Nathan Strenge and Sam Neisen are award-winning teachers designing a school around youth empowerment and community problem solving. They collaborate with community stakeholders to enrich and inform their learner-centered paradigm. They have been trained by Education Reimagined and are part of Transcend Education's national team of transformational educators.

Executive Function Coaching to Support Living Skills from Home to Dorm Living – Melissa Malen

Learn about executive function (EF) skills because most 2e students experience challenges with these skills in areas such as organization, planning, time management, prioritizing and meeting deadlines; whether turning in an assignment or walking out the door on time. Discuss tactics that can be used while living at home to facilitate EF skills that can also be used to bridge home to dorm living for students attending residential summer programs or college.

Dr. Malen is passionate about 2e student achievement and student development of learning accommodations. Melissa provides academic coaching to support student talent development and achievement. Melissa works with gifted students that are challenged with ADHD, ASD, NLD, written and reading comprehension disabilities, dyslexia, depression, and anxiety.

Give Them Rigor or Give Them Mortis : Leading ELA Challenge with Mentor Network – Marti Sievek & Tania Lyon

This presentation overviews Mankato Area Public Schools strategic use of a new online gateway to challenge gifted and talented learners. The chosen curriculum conveys and ignites passion for the art, story, and study of English Language Arts. Attendees will learn how Mankato Area Public Schools utilizes a cluster model for gifted education within a balanced approach to literacy framework to benefit students and instructors with personalized learning; embedded assessments; immediate feedback; collaborative opportunities; and flexible options for student choice and voice.

Marti Sievek is an Innovative educational leader with fifteen years experience in pre-K through adult education. He is experienced in providing strategic direction, collaborative planning, and implementation for systematic change, has acute awareness of the impact of culture and race in educational systems and beyond and is committed to developing thoughtful, confidently prepared students, vibrant schools, and strong communities.

Tania Lyon is an experienced language arts educator, AP Language and Composition Exam Reader, and district talent development coordinator. She has a masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction, a doctoral degree in Critical Pedagogy in Educational Leadership and a K-12 Principal's license. She is the current president of MEGT.

Growth Mindset - Say WHAT? – Jenine Severson

Growth Mindset... Fixed Mindset... YET?? What does all of this mean? During this presentation you will understand what it means to have a growth mindset and learn about the power of YET. We will discuss ways to support your students and children by the way you structure your classroom/home and through rich literature that will help to facilitate discussions and learning with all children. I will also share a comprehensive book list that I have created to support many areas of Social Emotional Learning.

Jenine Severson has worked with GT students for 15 years and is now a GT Resource Teacher. She is also the Coordinator for NWTA (Northwest Talent Academy) Summer program to provide summer programming for G/T students. Jenine is a certified SENG Model Parent Group Facilitator and proud parent of a GT child.

High School Teens and their College-Level Research: Factors in their Success – Terry Friedrichs, Collin McEllistrom, Amogh Kulkarni & Devesh Bhor

The adult presenter describes successful techniques of high school researchers nationally in selecting and accomplishing college-level research, as well as effective approaches of mentors in guiding these youth. Three teen presenters then explain their college-level research. The first two students describe the innovative gifted-education and legal data-base approaches that guided their mutual inquiry into openings in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for serving the strengths of twice-exceptional students. The third youth explains his creation of Java coding techniques that could be used to develop a visual-impairment-related mobility app for Microsoft's new HoloLens.

Dr. Terry Friedrichs has long served as a high school mentor on advanced research projects, with a number of mentees being recognized as Minnesota Scholars of Distinction. Collin McEllistrom is a senior at Henry Sibley High School in Mendota Heights, Amogh Kulkarni is a junior at Wayzata Sr. High in Wayzata, and Devesh Bhor is a sophomore at East Ridge Sr. High in Woodbury.

Homeschooling Gifted Children – CHOICES Chapter Members

Join homeschooling parents of gifted and talented students as they answer your questions and help you find your way! If school is not a great fit, you need additional resources or you may be already thinking of/wondering about homeschooling or other options, then this is the session for you. No question is too simple or too unusual. No age too young or old.

CHOICES (Curated Education, Homeschooling, Online Learning, Independent Study, Charter and Private School, Enrichment and Experiential Learning, Shared Time) chapter members are parents who are curating their children's education.

The Intersection of Lived Experience, Learned Experience, Formal Education, and Emotional Intelligence – Alonzo Kelly

Imagine a four way intersection with no signage for drivers to heed as they approach. This image reflects the point at which we engage one another, personally and professionally, and the potential damage from conflict if neither is willing to 'Yield' as a default maneuver. The 'Power of Pause' allows us to be intentional with our communication, critical in our thinking, and empathetic in our response. Following this simple, yet powerful instruction, is how strong communities are created and sustained.

Little Gifts – Pam McDonald

How do I know if my pre-schooler is gifted?... and if gifted now what?... Come to an interactive session that shares information on characteristics of pre-school giftedness as well as resources for the gifted pre-schooler and parents.

Pam McDonald has been working in the gifted education field for over thirty years. She is currently consulting with school districts and families and is also an adjunct faculty member at Hamline University.

Meeting the Needs of Mathematically Gifted Students – Ed Zaccaro

Are you finding it difficult to meet the needs of children who are gifted in mathematics? Children who are talented in mathematics must not only progress through their curriculum at the proper pace, but also must be exposed to material that lights a fire and nurtures their gift. A failure to find mathematics challenging, interesting, or relevant are significant factors when children lose interest in mathematics. This session will cover the most important features of programs that successfully meet the needs of mathematically gifted children.

Ed is a popular presenter at math, homeschool and gifted education conferences and has approached gifted education as a parent, teacher, and school board member. He possesses a unique sense of humor and has the ability to make math fun and challenging. He has a Masters degree in Gifted Education and is the author of several books for mathematically gifted children.

Mindfulness for Growth – Carrie Foster

Learn how mindfulness strategies can refuel your connection to those around you and support the gifted child/ren you serve. You'll gain strategies to help mitigate burnout and find ways to infuse mindfulness into your home, classroom, and life. This session can be attended by administrators, parents, and educators.

Carrie Foster holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education from the University of Wisconsin, Superior, a Master of Arts in Education from Saint Mary's University and an Education Specialist Degree in Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Misdiagnosed in the Workplace: Helping Our Kids Survive in the World – Alonzo Kelly

The truth is not eloquent. Our misdiagnosed children grow up and are primed to be misdiagnosed at work. The workplace however will not mislabel their employees as ‘ADHD’ or ‘Oppositional Defiant’. Their performance evaluations will reflect them as ‘argumentative’, ‘lacking teamwork’, and ‘poor communicators’. This session will explore how we as teachers, parents, advocates, and allies strengthen our relationship with employers and embrace our role as counselors and teachers for those responsible to the continued growth of our children.

New to Gifted? – Wendy Behrens

This presentation will be tailored to session attendees and cover questions such as: What does it mean to be gifted? What are some of the characteristics and behaviors related to giftedness? What about asynchronous development? Is it possible for a child to be gifted and have a learning disability, or do they cancel out? How is a child identified as gifted? What school/educational options are there for gifted students?

Wendy Behrens serves as the Gifted and Talented Education Specialist for the Minnesota Department of Education, providing leadership and consultation services for educators, administrators, and parents. She provides technical assistance to and collaborates with institutions of higher education, professional organizations, educator networks, and others interested in promoting rigorous educational opportunities.

Perfectionism’s Antidote – Tom Greenspon

How do we encourage kids to “be all they can be,” in our intensely competitive culture, without creating perfectionists? Dealing with perfectionism begins with an understanding of its psychology; for perfectionists, making mistakes implies personal defectiveness and possible personal rejection. It means never seeming good enough. Perfectionism is not a necessary part of giftedness. Pursuit of excellence is vitalizing, while perfectionism’s inseparable anxiety about mistakes is debilitating; learn how to create an environment acceptance — perfectionism’s antidote.

Thomas S. Greenspon, Ph.D., is an author, a recently-retired psychologist and marriage and family therapist, and a faculty member at the Minnesota Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. Tom and his wife Barbara are former co-presidents of the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented.

Pillars of Parenting for Peace at Home – Suz Feely

Are you stressed out and exhausted from your child’s poor listening, lack of self-control and defiant behavior? Family dynamics are complex, especially when you have a gifted child. The constant questioning, button-pushing and limit-testing may lead to anger, yelling, and then burdensome guilt. You want to enjoy spending time with your child but instead you feel disrespected. It’s time to regain your authority – and your sanity! In this interactive presentation you will receive solutions from the Mad2Glad Blueprint that are key to having a calmer, more cooperative child and restoring your sanity. You will learn more about the neuroscience behind your child’s behavior. Most importantly, you will leave with practical tips that you can implement immediately.

Suz Feely, Certified Mad2Glad Parenting Coach, is a mother of 2 gifted sons and a dynamic daughter. Suz guides parents in a step-by-step approach to dramatically reduce defiance and disrespect and re-establish confidence and authority. Suz is uniquely gifted at walking alongside parents as they learn to develop deeper connections with their children.

Practical Ideas for Improving Critical Thinking and Writing – Nathan Levy

This workshop will help teachers assist children in developing fluency of writing and thinking. Participants will develop options for problem-solving and critical thinking and will learn time-saving strategies and creative ideas. Writing and critical thinking activities that have been used successfully with gifted children will be shared in this engaging, interactive presentation.

Nathan Levy is an internationally-known gifted consultant, teacher and coordinator of gifted and has been a school principal for 27 years. He is the author of Stories with Holes, There Are Those, Not Just Schoolwork and many other books used in gifted programs.

Project North Star Book Recommendations for 2Es (Grades 4-8) – Stephen Schroeder-Davis

My role for Project North Star was to develop a robust list of titles that featured authentic portrayals of gifted students and a companion series of "reflection guides" that would enable entire classes, literature circles or individual gifted students to read, reflect, and process the content in each book. While reading and researching I found a "sub-genre" of extraordinary depictions of twice-exceptional characters that I have used to help twice-exceptional students, their peers, teachers, and parents understand and embrace the sometimes confusing world in which 2Es reside. My presentation will include summaries of the best of these titles and also suggestions for how to use reflections guides and discussion to promote self-understanding and self-acceptance for 2Es.

Stephen Schroeder-Davis, Ed.D. spent 42 years teaching and coordinating Gifted Services for Elk River Schools. He served as President for MCGT and board member with MEGT and the MDE's G/T Advisory Council. He was awarded the "Friend of the Gifted" from the MCGT, MEGT, and Ohio Gifted Council and created the G/T certificate for Saint Mary's University.

Recognizing Anxiety in Gifted Children – Shelly Harvey

Levels of childhood anxiety are on the rise and gifted children are no exception to this trend. In this session we will explore the seven ways your child may be telling you they are experiencing anxiety without directly saying so. You will leave with evidence-based tools to help your child cope with their anxiety and tips for working with your child's school to identify possible accommodations. This session is intended for parents early in their journey learning how to identify signs of anxiety and help their child develop coping skills.

Shelly Harvey, MA, LSC is a school counselor, parenting coach and parent of a gifted son. Her areas of specialty are: anxiety, Social Thinking, Zones of Regulation and teaching executive functioning skills to students. She is co-leading the newly launched 2e parenting group and recently received SENG facilitator training.

Socratic Seminars: Easy as 1-2-3 – David Wolff

For years I wanted to use Socratic Seminars to elicit deep conversations about a topic in class but was never able to structure it and explain it to students...until now! Join me to learn about how Socratic Seminars benefit gifted learners, how to structure it in a classroom, and practice one together.

David Wolff is the Principal of Neveln Elementary School in Austin, MN. David has been in education for 19 years as a classroom teacher, a District Coordinator of Gifted & Talented, and as Principal. He served on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Educators for the Gifted & Talented and Math Masters.

Spiritually--Energetically--Existentially Gifted? – Kris Happe

Can your child 'feel' things that aren't 'there', see and hear things that you cannot, know things ahead of time that they have no prior knowledge of, or ask about the meaning of life and other big questions? When an intuitive child's sensitivity is nurtured, validated and supported, the child learns to love and honor their inner light. Learn strategies to nurture and support your child, learn about some fantastic kid-friendly resources, and some ideas to support your parenting of this type of giftedness. This area of giftedness is gaining more attention and support from the world of gifted, and this session is where you can own your experience and relax in the knowledge that you aren't alone.

Kris Happe is an educator with two gifted children. She has been a classroom teacher, gifted education program specialist, and district gifted coordinator. Kris served on the MDE's Gifted Education Advisory Council and presents at NAGC, SENG, MCGT and MEGT conferences. She is a certified SENG Model Parent Group facilitator.

Sports Activities that Benefit Gifted Children – Stuart Dansinger

Many parents want their gifted child to participate in one or more sports activities. Our society values sports because they are entertaining and teach many life lessons. However, there are very few articles or research written about this topic even though most gifted children are asynchronous in their development. Selecting a specific sport activity becomes problematic if the child's physical, social or emotional ability does not fit with the sport requirements. Parent and child need to consider several factors when choosing a sport that better suits their child. These factors will be discussed with case studies. Questions and answers to follow.

Stuart Dansinger is a Licensed Psychologist and Licensed School Psychologist in private practice. He first assessed gifted children in 1965 and has continued to do so every year since then. He has been an MCGT member since 1968 and was awarded the MCGT Friend of the Gifted Award in 2009.

Teaching Gifted Children How to Reduce their Anxiety – Stuart Dansinger

Gifted children are not free of stress. Their anxiety and struggles with life challenges occur regularly and have many causes. Unfortunately, relaxation exercises are not taught on a formal basis to cope with tension arising at home, school, or community. When a child is able to reduce his/her anxiety he/she can think more clearly, make better decisions, get through difficult situations easier, solve problems, and feel confident and successful. This session will discuss and describe a number of techniques that can be done in a short time, at one's convenience, without cost, and based on psychological research. Q and A will follow.

Stuart Dansinger is a Licensed Psychologist and Licensed School Psychologist in private practice. He first assessed gifted children in 1965 and has continued to do so every year since then. He has been an MCGT member since 1968 and was awarded the MCGT Friend of the Gifted Award in 2009.

What Is Up With Gifted Learners and Writing? – Tina Van Erp

This one-hour session is a forum for a conversation and opportunity to learn from each other regarding the common conundrum of gifted learners and "hating" writing. Information from research, recommended resources and strategies will be shared.

Tina Van Erp, M.Ed., The River®Coach, is a gifted learner coach with 20 years of experience in gifted education and supporting gifted learners and their families. She is specifically interested in working toward solutions to consistent challenges for gifted learners.

Why Are Some Tasks Frustrating, and Other Tasks Easy? – Erika Kluge

How can someone identified as a gifted individual struggle with school or work tasks? Identify how to balance strengths and challenges to reduce frustration and anxiety. Learn about various technology tools and learning strategies used to help individuals in K-12, college, and career settings to become more independent, successful, and productive when doing academic and career tasks. Gain a better understanding of what and how a Twice Exceptional (2E) individual should self-advocate when meeting with teachers and employers. Technology tools include Mac, PC, Chromebook, and iOS programs and apps. THINK with Success does not sell nor endorse any technology products.

Erika Kluge, Director of THINK with Success, is an Assistive Technology (AT) Specialist & Educator. Her experience encompasses all age groups with an emphasis of AT used to enhance academics and work tasks. She is a past Recipient of The Minnesota STAR Program's Awards for Excellence in Assistive Technology.

Why Headphones, Warm Lights, and Diffusers Help Gifted Learners... Sometimes. – Max Melby

Educators and parents have plenty of different tools and approaches for meeting the learning needs of gifted children... but that doesn't make it any easier! The goal of this session to clearly identify how gifted children's sensory needs may vary from the norm and what strategies research suggests we should implement to accommodate those needs... as well as real-life examples of successes and failures from actual implementation.

Max Melby is the Director of Arete Academy- a school serving twice exceptional learners in the Twin Cities area since 2014. He has a foundation in experiential, outdoor, and science education with tier 4 licenses in secondary sciences and a master's in cognitive science and instructional leadership.